

Bulletproof Charm

Anthony LaPaglia plays a nihilistic hitman in *Bulletproof Heart* (opening April 7), another role seemingly tailor-made for the actor who first came to attention as an Italian hood in *Betsy's Wedding*. Except LaPaglia isn't from Brooklyn, as most people assume; he was born and raised in Australia. "Meryl Streep does an accent—everybody falls down," he jokes. "I play Brooklyn, and there's no credit for that at all." But someone's paying attention: LaPaglia has three more movies coming out this year (*Empire*, *Nowhere Man*, and *Lucky Break*, a small Australian film in which he plays, yes, an American). He's also in rehearsals for a Broadway revival of Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo* with Mercedes Ruehl, at Circle in the Square starting April 21. *Bul-*



letproof, a tough, smart film noir, follows his character during the course of one evening, an evening during which he falls in love with the woman he's been ordered to kill (Mimi Rogers), only to realize that she knows what he's supposed to do and wants it to happen more than anyone. (*Faithful*, starring Cher and Chazz Palminteri and due out this summer, has a similar plot but a far lighter tone.)

In a career filled with small gems (*29th Street*) and studio misfires (*Mixed Nuts*; *One Good Cop*), LaPaglia seems to have stumbled onto a winning streak. Still, LaPaglia sees room for improvement. "Doing theater, you have to work about ten times harder than when you're doing a film," he says. "I find myself in the middle of rehearsals thinking, 'God, I have to call my agent and tell her to get me a movie, because I need a vacation.'"